THE BOOK INDUSTRY IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVES ZAKARI MOHAMMED

Abstract

The paper examines the concept of national development within the Nigerian perspectives and the problems associated with its national development. The role of education in national development were highlighted followed by the place of publishing and book trade in the promotion and support of knowledge acquisition and dissemination as basis for national development in all spheres of life. The need for the application of ICTs to publishing and book trade in Nigeria was proposed. It concludes that the Nigerian publishers need to fully utilize the ICTs so that they can cope with the development challenges of the 21st century Nigeria.

Introduction

National Development simply implies the advancement or growth of a country especially socioeconomically, politically, literarily (educationally) culturally and technologically. The transformation of the socio-economic structure of a country facilitates easy development and progress for the overall advancement of the society. Thus, every nation needs to be dynamic and develop in all spheres of human endeavour so that the well being of the society is generally enhanced. Like other nations, Nigeria came up with its national goals aimed at developing the nation all round. The National Goals of Nigeria are (MAMSER: 1987):

- United, strong and self reliant nation;
- A greater and dynamic economy;
- A just and egalitarian society;
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens; and
- A free and democratic society.

One of the major avenues through which successive governments recognize to mobilize the Nigerian public to contribute their quota to the development of the nation is education. Perhaps this explains why in most cases, the financial allocations for education come second to defense in the Federal Government's annual budgets.

Nigeria National Development

In pursuance of the Nigeria's goals conceived as the catalyst for the development of the nation, successive governments (both military and civilian) since the country's independence in 1960 attempt to put in place mechanisms for the mobilization of the citizenry through various fashioned programmes of activities to ensure their cooperation, participation and compliance to further strengthen the resolve to

achieve the desired objectives and goals. Some of the strategies, activities and programmes put in place develop the country to be self reliant at least socioeconomically (Mohammed: 1994) include: Operation Feed The Nation (OFN); the 'Green Revolution'; 'Ethical Orientation'; 'War Against Indiscipline (WAI)'; Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP); Directorate For Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI); Mass Mobilisation for Social and Recovery (MAMSER); Economic National Orientation Agency ; War Against Indiscipline and Corruption (WAIC); Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) and recently, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP). However, a critical assessment of these programmes, showed that they are hybrids or replicants of each other in disguise all aimed at bringing about rapid and even development of the citizenry and the nation at large.

The institutionalization of the above programmes and activities are based on the simple fact that:

- 1. the essence of development is to transform the socio-economic structure of the country which, in the case of Nigeria, could mean transforming its predominantly agricultural base to include industrial economy;
- Nigeria is vastly blessed with high potentials of human and material resources (land and mineral resources) necessary to uplift its socio-economic structure to make itself reliant.
- 3. The citizenry of a nation need to be education, enlightened, and mobilized so that they can contribute their quota to the development of the country.

However, the extent of a nation's development or otherwise will largely depend upon the following conditions;

- 1. Political stability and good governance;
- 2. Provision of qualitative and functional education;
- 3. Vibrant and positively skewed economy;
- 4. Provision of timely relevant information;
- 5. Availability of substantial level of national savings to be invested properly and productively; and
- 6. Availability of implementable policies, strategic plans and effective coordination and management mechanisms to achieve the stated objectives and goals.

Considering the abundant human and material resources of Nigeria, it could be said that the country has high potentials to evolve and sustain a high level of socio- economic development. What Nigeria however required now more than ever before is to evolve sustainable policy measures that would bring about tangible benefits that are equitably distributed for the overall development of all the sectors of the economy in line with the aspirations of the entire Nigerians.

A review of the state-of-art-of Nigeria development as an independent nation presupposes that the country is consistently moving one step forward and two steps backwards due to some obvious factors. Nigeria is no doubt rich with fertile agricultural land, mineral resources such as oil and natural gas resources from which it derives its major foreign earnings. Also, it has no problem with human resources availability and human resources are no problem. Unfortunately, the average people in the country are getting poorer and deprived day by day; the nation is increasingly getting sunk into huge foreign debts, and the entire economy is gradually retrogressing after the oil boom period of the 1970s. Since the 1980s, there has been unprecedented sociocultural, tribal, ethnic, religious, communal, economic and political crises across the country. These have negative impact on the political, social and economic life of the Nigerian nation. Nonimplementation of viable policies and plans has brought untold economic hardship to the people. The situation is compounded by policy inconsistencies, bad management; poor plan implementation and coordination; and distorted and unworkable plans and policies due to changes and succession of governments. The concomitant effect of these shortcomings is continued changes of policies and plans which, when implemented, may achieve objectives completely in variance with the initial ones. Therefore, the focus of the government and the governed tend to eventually become blurred and unfocussed thereby resulting into loss of the desired objectives intended to be achieved at the end of the day.

According to Ayagi (2001), the Nigerian economy has been a victim of divergent and inconsistent policies over the years since the coming into being of the geographical expression called Nigeria...and the entire economic life of Nigerians was guided by government actions. He added that, the growth and development of the Nigerian economy, as a national effort, has been the responsibility of the government.

dominated and virtually owned by the Therefore, in his own contribution, government. Kwanashie (2001) suggested that democracy should force public policy to be a direct consequence of public wants, perceptions, opinions and interests and not the dictates of a few in society that control power. The democratic institutions must ensure that the policy process is transparent and participatory to ensure that the quality of policy outcomes is enhanced and made to address the needs of the citizens. Also, he called for the restructuring and reorienting of the public sector to ensure that public policies in a democratic setting are effective and should play the required catalytic and regulatory functions necessary for sustainable development. Nevertheless, these propositions point to the need for the Nigerian policy processes to be made more effective, relevant and capable of articulating the needs of the citizenry through direct and popular participation of the people/masses at all the levels of policy formulation and implementation.

Other factors, which have contributed to the retardation of Nigeria's development as a nation, include:

- 1. The squandermenia tendencies which since the 1980s has led to squandering of the country's riches through different styles of treasury looting such as over invoicing and inflated contracts. This has resulted into impoverishment of the people as well as the accumulation of massive foreign debts.
- 2. The incessant internal economic crisis which has brought about wide spread poverty, persistent sectoral disequilibrium, unfortunate low returns on public sector investment, massive scale of corruption and lack of accountability; mounting internal debt; deteriorating and dilapidating infrastructure; low industrial capacity utilization; rise in inflationary and unemployment indices; widening gap between the rich and the poor; and fizzling out of the middle class.
- 3. Political considerations in policy and plan formulation and implementation tend to destroy the spirit of coordination and cooperation among the various tiers of governments, political parties, interest groups and societies. This has also lead to selfish economic considerations and suspicion in institutional systems and services as well as poor management leading to the relocation of institutions such as the Nigerian Maritime Authority (NMA) from Lagos to Abuja and back to Lagos, and/or the scrapping or

vanishing of institutions such as the Nigerian National Shipping Line (NNSL) and the Nigerian Airways.

In the light of the fore goings, it is necessary to evolve and ensure a virile and sustained socioeconomic environment within the globalisation paradigm. There should be progressive and deliberate struggles and efforts to legitimize and sustain all relevant viable programmes and institutions aimed at promoting and enhancing sustainable national development.

The Place of Education In National Development

Education at all levels is the key to national development. It is when the citizenry are educated and enlightened that they can meaningfully contribute their quota to the general development of their country either as leaders or the led. It is in this spirit that nations of the world are expected to give education a top priority consideration in the scheme of things that must be done by all governments whether politically, socio-economically and technologically developed, or developing.

In all respect education should be seen as a privilege and also a right of every citizen of any nation. It is an effective instrument for development; a strategic tool for liberating the generality of people from ignorance, disease and poverty and a dynamic channel for encouraging progress and overall development of a people and nation at large. Infact, equality of educational opportunity is required of a nation to guarantee building egalitarian society. Thus, in order to ensure sustainable development of any nation, the education of the children, men and women and indeed parents becomes very necessary. The effect therefore, considering the share size of the Nigerian population, which is well over 100 million, it cannot afford to mess up with the issues concerning education. It is estimated that there are 48,242 primary schools in Nigeria with 17 million pupils, 7,104 secondary schools with 5 million students and 207 colleges of education, polytechnics and universities with 800,000 students. This is apart from those adults who have enrolled in the adult continuing education class. This implies that governments at all levels need to commit a lot of more financial resources to upgrade the structures and learning facilities including libraries in the educational institutions as well as the public libraries to cater for the promotion of continuing education of the general public.

Generally, members of a society who are said to be illiterate particularly in the official language adopted by the society or nation are often regarded as marginal members of the society due to perceived lack of technical and general knowledge required of them to contribute to the specific and general development of the society. Therefore, at both the formal and non-formal system of education of a country and within the context of national development, educational programmes at all levels should include: functional literacy; remedial, continuing, vocational, cultural, civic and aesthetic education for the young, youth, adults, and old ones irrespective of their gender. It is therefore necessary that governments establish not only educational institution libraries, but the public libraries to enhance free flow of information and knowledge to the citizenry. This is because, successful and vibrant democratic governments and institutions thrive better when the citizenry have the capacity to choose their leaders freely, participate and contribute productively to the debates and discussions on national issues that will facilitate the general development of the country. Thus, needless to emphasize, is the provision for easy access to relevant and up-to-date books and other information resources that would assist to give the people the opportunity to realize their potentials and to contribute to the development of their societies and the nation at large.

The Nigeria's National Policy on Education (1985) has aptly articulated the aforementioned expectations for implementation. The driving force against the realization of these goals is seemingly share insensitivity of the governments of the day to educational programmes. The school system is poorly funded, while most of them lack functional libraries and in most cases, they are non-existent nonexist at all. The plight of the teachers especially their welfare and students/pupils is taken for granted and with levity. Consequently, this leads to continued brain drain of qualified and experienced teachers to put their mouths where money is; reduction of the quantity and quality of instructional materials including library and information resources in the educational institutions at all levels.

In the light of the above, it is not unusual to find in most Nigerian primary and secondary schools especially in the rural areas, children sitting on the floor in the classroom due to lack of desks, some write on their laps or put the books on the floor and write while they are bent down. At the tertiary institutions, could be students found standing outside or sitting on the windows of lecture theatre listening to lectures delivered without public address systems. There is lack of appropriate and adequate reading materials especially in the libraries resulting into copying notes from the board and relying on teachers' handouts.. Some schools are unable to accommodate the children/students due to over population and dilapidation of infrastructures.

Shuaibu (1999) remarked that the Nigerian education has failed. It is characterized by poor quality; absolence; insufficiency; meddlesomeness; disincentiveness; frustration; insufficiency; indiscipline; unexpected and unwanted consequencies and all the vices that could bring a business enterprise to a halt.

Publishing And Book Trade In National Development

Hitherto the Jomtien Conference held in Thailand in 1990 where the participants declared that by the year 2000, all countries would achieve education for all children, Nigeria had since mounted relevant education programmes at regional, state and national levels at various times to educate the generality of the Nigerian society, particularly the children, adult and rural masses. Such programmes include Universal Primary Education (UPE) introduced in 1976, and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in the year 2000. The introduction of both the UPE and the UBE could be said to be a recognition of the fact that educating the general public is a viable alternative to the rapid development of the Nigerian nation. Relevant bodies and institutions were therefore established at all levels of educational systems while policies were also formulated to see to the realization of the set goals. Such bodies and institutions include Education Tax Fund (ETF) and the National Commissions for variety of education programmes such as National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) National Agency for Mass Literacy and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI) established in 1976 to upgrade the quality of teachers in the nation's educational system. Poor policy and plan implementation have reduced their impact on the target group.

The Jomtien declaration of 1990 has by no means called for massive investment in education so as to ensure that the stated goals and objectives are achieved. The declaration also threw a serious challenge to those in the book industry more especially in terms of the need to flood the schools, libraries and information centers with the relevant and up-to-date books and other information resources that can be used in the educational institutions and by the public. Indeed, books and other information resources provide opportunities for societies, nations and people to be better educated, enlightened, governed, unified in purpose of actions, and improved quality life, reading habits and cooperation. Thus, the publishers need to collaborate and cooperate with authors, illustrators, designers and printers in order to facilitate the production and provision of requisite information resources. It is believed that the availability of text books and other published and non published information resources in libraries and information centers as well as in the hands of the teachers and students/pupils to read and work with, would improve on the academic performance of the students/pupils and also stimulate their interests in the subject areas they would want to specialize in. It will also facilitate the development and nurturing of reading culture even at the early stage of the children. Besides, it will afford the pupils/students to read the views and ideas of other people and appreciate how they argue rather than mere re-reading and relying on their copied notes and gogitate the views and ideas put across by their teachers only. Naturally, availability of adequate and suitable books and other information resources for use within and outside the school systems are vital means of promoting and enhancing qualitative and continuing education at all levels including productive use of leisure times. Besides, through the use of books and other information resources, one is properly guided in decision-making, choice of vocation and area of specialization in school, political awareness and the rights of individuals in the society.

On the contribution of African publishers to availability of books, Makotsi (1998) remarked that the publishing sector in Africa accounts for less than 5% of the continent's overall economy. Of this contribution by the publishers, over 75% is earned from textbooks trade, whose major share is financed by government and external donors. The private publishers control a meager 20% of the book trade. Africa imports close to 70% of its book needs and exports less than 5% of its total output. In countries like Nigeria, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Kenya, the average annual output of fairly active individual publishing house is 26 titles. Consequent upon the numerous problems facing the publishing industry in Africa, 'African Publishers Network (APNET) was formed in 1992 to contribute to the dismantling of the obstacles that impede publishing in Africa. APNET addresses these problems through its programmes and projects such as training; trade promotion for African books within and outside the continent; research and documentation; networking among the publishers; and a lobbying platform for the promotion and development of Africa publishing at national, continental and international levels.

The early publishers in Nigeria were the Christian and Islamic missionaries whose interests were basically to produce texts that will facilitate the propagation of their religions. However, in spite of the long history of printing and publishing industry in Nigeria which started since 1846, the country is still lacking in the provision of texts for reading by the public and for educational systems. Agbebi and Fadima (1994) enumerated some of the problems facing the Nigerian publishing industries to include: (a) problems of hardware such as paper and paper products; printing inks, plates and chemicals; etc, (b) problem s of software such as book publishing and local authorship, book distribution and marketing, book use and readership, (c) problem of effective mounting and enforcement of government legislations, funding and subsidizing of publishing, etc. The Federal government through its agencies such as the Book Development Council (BDC) and Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) attempt to address these shortcomings through, say, embarking on tertiary publishing especially in science and technology project, promotion of readership campaign, etc. However, a critical examination of these efforts still indicates very minimal impact on the education industry and the publishing industry in particular. The dearth of requisite texts and journals is even more critical at the tertiary education level (Oyeoku: 1997) such that the Federal government has to secure a loan of \$120 million from the World Bank to acquire up-to-date books and journals for the Federal Universities. It was also followed by ECU \$10 million book loan project, which was dislocated later due to continued military rule in Nigeria. Fortunately, the Education Tax Fund (ETF) is rescuing the situation at all the levels of the educational systems.

The Nigerian educational system nevertheless is still threatened by shortages and high costs of books and other information resources. Some of these resources, in most cases, are arbitrarily charged especially by the secondary and primary school authorities at will to the detriment of the parents' economic capacity. Publishing venture is still centered around textbook publishing. It is estimated that over 90% of the books churned out by Nigerian publishers and printers are textbooks meant for the primary and secondary schools. Unfortunately, a large segment of the Nigerian society including the neo-literates and those literate only in Nigerian languages are not catered for appropriately by the publishers. The requisite publications are rarely found in schools, libraries and bookshops. Similarly, journal, fiction and children publishing even in the Nigerian languages are still highly inadequate. While it could be said that it is high time the Nigerian publishers, authors and other stakeholders in the book industry step up efforts to address the scarcity of published information resources, the publishers in particular should take the challenge of venturing into non-textbook publishing to cater for the newly acquired reading skills of the mass literacy products. There is still scarcity of appropriate and relevant publications for the Nigerians who are not within the school systems.

These shortages and escalating costs led to pervasive piracy of books and other information resources at all levels of educational institutions and in the public places in the society. It is not unusual to find a whole book photocopied and audio visual materials daubed at business centers in the country without the express permission of the author. The World Bank (1990) estimated that about 70% of all legitimate primary and secondary school textbooks were being pirated. In fact, even by the beginning of the 21st century, there is still massive indiscriminate photocopying in violation of copyright laws and the provisions of the Copyright Decree of 1988 regarding photocopying. The establishment of Copyright Commission is yet to make any visible impact on piracy in the country. Perhaps due to the bottlenecks associated with publishing in Nigeria and also the incapacitation of the National Library of Nigeria, publishers lavishly violate the legal deposit law by non-deposition of the required copies of their publications. Thus, they prefer to pay fine which, by all standards, is highly insignificant to be a deterrent to the offenders. Also, the amount of the fine means nothing when compared with the average price of a copy of the publication in the market.

It is pleasing that the Nigerian Publishers' Association (NPA) has been established. Part of its duties is to liaise with states and Federal governments on matters relating to publishing and represent its members, which are over 47, at conferences, seminars and book fairs especially at international levels. Its activities also include organizing local book fairs, publication of the <u>Publisher Magazine</u> (an annual publication), <u>Publisher's Newsletter</u> (a quarterly publication) and <u>Nigerian Books in Print</u> to show the publishing output of the Nigerian publishers. The NPA is also a member of the APNET aimed at addressing issues on publishing and

book trade in Nigeria. Similarly, the formation of the Association of Nigerian Authors and the Nigerian Guild of Editors as a forum for exchange of ideas and experiences for the development and promotion of local authorship in the country is a welcome idea. Thus, there is the need for mutual cooperation and understanding among these groups with related interests to coexist for the advancement of knowledge and socio-economic, cultural and political development of the country.

Digitalized Publishing And Book Trade

Another challenge to the publishing industry in Nigeria is their capacity and ability to cope with the impact of technology on publishing and book trade. This challenge is even more critical due to lack of adequate and qualified manpower to cope with the traditional technical methods of printing and publishing and lack of many accredited educational institutions in the country offering printing and publishing programmes and courses even at the certificate The Information level. and Communication Technology (ICT) particularly the telecommunication computer. and Internet technologies have greatly impact on the publishing industries world wide through the introduction of such facilities as: E-book: E-commerce: Low Volume Production; Internet Book Distribution; Print-ondemand Publications; E-mail; EDI and Bar Coding; CD-ROMs, Word Processing Packages, etc.

It has been predicted that the printed book as it is now currently may soon be relegated to the museum with the advent of the electronic book (e-book). The E-book is projected as the book of the future as postulated by the electronic gurus of the Microsoft. The E-book has the advantage of being sold in million copies in a very short time; it can easily be accessed instantaneously world wide; it can easily be updated, revised, and shaped any way; it can be read, listened to and have colour or music added, and it could have a dictionary accompanying the text. The major drawback to the E-book endeavour in Nigeria however, is that, the user, buyer, publisher, require a computer, a web page, a telecommunication line perhaps have a credit card which majority of the Nigerian public do not have nor have easy access to them around.

With the digitalized publishing system, the publisher can have low volume production especially for small markets at least cost and marginal profit, which could still be affordable to the buyers. This is made possible with the reduction of overhead costs. Thus, publishers can print to order, print out-of-print materials, within reasonable days. This type of advantage may not be easily enjoyed in the Nigerian book trade circle.

The ICTs allow the publishers to enjoy the Ecommerce privileges especially if they are on line. Products can be sold on-line on websites or rather home pages including advertising. Books and other items can also be sold through the Internet in 'netshops'. It is estimated that book sales on the Internet through net bookshops are now 15% of the total books sold, with amazon.com holding 80% of the market and barnesandnoble.com 10%. It is also predicted that the total book sales on-line will rise to 25% by year 2005 (Ross: 2000).

Beside the electronic book, the CD-ROM has also added another advantage to digitalized publishing. Several of the E-books could be copied on the CD-ROMs and made available in the market. The CD-ROMs have greatly reduced the problems of strains on the eyesight, electricity power failure, portability, storage, conveyance or dissemination of information; and updating of the book content.

Digitalized publishing also provides the publisher with such facilities as e-mail and telemarketing to boost the business endeavour. Telemarketing facilities use telephone systems such as the videophones to attract new customers world wide while retaining the existing ones. Whether fully automated or not, telemarketing has the provision for recording and playing messages which could be used to advertise products and take orders. The E-mail has been boosted with the advent of Multipurpose Internet Mail Extension (MIME) and other types of encoding schemes which have provisions for sending messages electronically including formatted documents, photos, pictures, sound files and video files as attachments. It is estimated that there are over 100 million E-mail users worldwide. Thus, contact with authors and printers is made easy with E-mails.

E-commerce can be effectively exploited when publishers maintain EDI and Bar coding mechanisms. The EDI is a computer-to-computer exchange of business documents in a standard format. It helps to transmit documents to shippers, transporters, customs, etc. with speedy economy as against sending bulk of papers through courier and postal agencies. Travel guides can easily be produced and updated with ease. The Barcode systems assist to identify a significant product distinct from others with all the relevant information about it readily available on the computer. The use and adoption of the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) as a means of giving creative works a distinct identification number will assist the copyright problems. The DOI, like the ISBN and ISSN, gives a unique number to a book, article, image, which identifies the registration agency, registrant, the type of identifier, such as the ISBN, and a number to identify the title.

By any standard digitalized publishing has several advantages to the modern publisher. The use of Internet which is seen as the most economic and fastest means of penetrating the global market, also reduces the amount of contact time lag (gap) between the publisher and the agents, printers, the customers, authors, etc. Unfortunately however, an average indigenous publisher in Nigeria is still far away from utilizing the ICTs fully to their advantage. Thus, it is important that the Nigerian educational institutions involved in the teaching of publishing and book trade include in their curriculum digitalised publishing online design skills, editorial skills and other ICT applications so that the products can fit into the 21st century publishing dispensation as well as publishing and book trade which is essentially digital based. Hence, for the Nigerian publishers to fully utilize the advantages of ICTs; they need to embark on deliberate human capacity building and accept the use of ICT for publishing so as to cope with the exigencies of the 21st century Digital Age.

The Way Forward

In the light of the above, the following strategies should be taken to enhance publishing and book trade in Nigeria to facilitate the country's development into a greater nation.

- 1. The Government should:
 - (a) consider issues relating to national economies such as inflation, poor infrastructure, illiteracy with seriousness and be properly addressed to widen the markets for book trade.
 - (b) ensure that all forms of taxation and duties on books and other related materials for publishing and reading and should be waved or drastically reduced.
 - (c) Encourage banks to extend their loan facilities to publishers and book vendors/agents.
 - (d) Recognize and accept publishing and book trade as a strategic industry to be accorded due respect as a major contributor to

education and knowledge acquisition for the overall national development.

- 2. The Publishers should:
- (a) expand their publishing programmes and activities to cover the more general areas such as fiction, literature and academic books.
 - (b) Engage in massive publication of texts in Nigerian languages.
 - (c) Ensure the production of quality books and other reading materials.
 - (d) Endeavour to undertake all forms of book promotion such as production and distribution of catalogues, stock lists, participation in book fairs, book reviews, etc.
 - (e) Maintain relevant information and databases on publishing and book trade for easy access, verification and acquisition; even online.
 - (f) Encourage and support human resources capacity building especially for ICT applications.
 - (g) Encourage and participate in reading promotion to develop reading cultures, in the society.
 - (h) Provide credit facilities to book sellers and agents.
- 3. The public should endeavour to promote and patronize locally published materials for personal, public and official use at formal and informal systems of knowledge acquisition for development endeavours.

Conclusion

It is apparent that education is the bedrock for any meaningful development of any nation. It is also clear that publishing and book trade is required to flourish lavishly so that educational activities and knowledge acquisition needed for national development take place with ease.

It is therefore necessary for the general public, the governments and the publishers to make a complete 'U-turn' from the previous practices and support for publishing and book trade so that the latter can join the race for ICT applications to publishing and book trade with the view to fit into the dynamics of national development in the 21st century.

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